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REPORT

TO THE

BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Year 1959

BY



J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health

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Medical Officer of Health

STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Senior Public Health Inspector :

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*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of
Bellingham :*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1959.

The social conditions of the district continue to show little change from year to year. After rising slowly for some years, the population figure fell slightly, but the annual variations are so slight that the population is virtually stationary. The area is a very large one, thinly populated, and of scenic and historic interest. The opportunities for employment are limited, and though many people come as visitors, few become residents.

While the estimated mid-year population has fallen, there were more than twice as many births as deaths. The death rate is remarkably low, and the age at death remains high — half the deaths occurred in people over 70 and one quarter of the deaths in people over 80. The infant mortality rate is low, and the statistics generally compare favourably with those for the country as a whole. Infectious disease during the year calls for little comment, the diseases notified being few in number and of a minor nature. It is encouraging to record no cases of diphtheria, poliomyelitis or tuberculosis.

The communications of the district have not improved in any way, and the distances involved make the application of the social services difficult. With many old people living restricted lives through limitations of transport it might be expected that hardship and distress would occur. This does not seem to be so. Very few indeed are reported as being in need of care or help, and the Home Help service, for example, is not as widely used as elsewhere. The answer is probably the independence and neighbourliness of country people, and certainly almost all the home helps employed are neighbours. Considerable help is given by the ambulance car service in taking patients to hospital appointments or clinics, and this must ease some difficulties. The other services and social activities usually provided for old people are not available on account of isolation and distance, and these seem to be insurmountable.

The Council are meanwhile taking steps to increase the number of houses available for old people, though necessarily in a small way. During 1959, schemes were in pre-

paration for four bungalows at Wark and five at Bellingham. Further housing for general needs is also planned at Otterburn: it was originally planned that the Council would build 20 houses and the War Department 24 for their own use, but the Council are now planning 21 houses for general use and the War Department houses are deferred.

The Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company, as water undertakers, have now completed their development, but a small scheme for Stannersburn was completed by them during 1959. No other scheme for bringing piped water to small communities has been agreed, the cost being unreasonably high, but a scheme to supply Knowesgate is still under consideration.

The sewage scheme for Otterburn was approved during 1959, after an appeal to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to reconsider an earlier refusal. It will cost some £30,000 but it will bring much needed facilities to a village that attracts many visitors. The scheme for Kirkwhelpington, deferred some time ago on account of cost, is now being reconsidered by the Ministry. The situation at Ridsdale has caused much thought on account of the standard of the houses, and the Council have not yet decided on policy. The only other schemes envisaged are for Stannersburn and East Woodburn. It is a pleasure to record continued progress towards improving sanitation in a district where the Council have already done so much to provide amenities.

My thanks are due to the staff of the Health Department for their continued capable and loyal services. The Chairman and Councillors have shown interest in and given encouragement to the work of the Department, and the Clerk and other officers have been most helpful and co-operative.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. M. McEWAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Population

The population of the Rural District, estimated at 30th June, 1959, was 5,390. This is a decrease of 140 on the previous year, and the trend over the last few years for a gradual increase in population is this year reversed.

Birth Rate

There were 104 live births during 1959, 3 being illegitimate, and when an adjustment factor is applied this gives a birth rate of 21.61 per 1,000 population, while the figure for England and Wales is 16.5 per 1,000. There were 2 still births during the year, giving a rate of 19.2 per 1,000 total births. The National figure is 20.7 per 1,000.

Infant Mortality

There was one death of an infant under one year. This gives an infant death rate of 9.6 per 1,000 births. The figure for England and Wales is 22.0 per 1,000.

Death Rate

A total of 40 deaths occurred during 1959, compared with 45 in 1958 and 60 in 1957. This gives a crude death rate of 7.42 per 1,000 population. The figure for England and Wales is 11.6 per 1,000 population.

To Summarise :

Live births	.. .. .	104
Live births per 1,000 population	.. ..	21.61
Still births	.. .. .	2
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 live and still births	..	19.04
Total live and still births	.. .. .	106
Infant deaths	.. .. .	1
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	..	9.6
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births legitimate	.. .. .	9.6
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births— illegitimate	.. .. .	Nil.
Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births	..	9.6
Illegitimate live births per cent of total births	..	2.88
Maternal deaths	.. .. .	Nil.
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births	.. .. .	Nil.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Measles

This was again the most frequently notified disease with 34 cases.

Scarlet Fever

Only one case was notified.

Whooping Cough

Four cases were notified.

Dysentery

There were four cases during the year, occurring independently.

Tuberculosis

No case was notified during 1959.

Poliomyelitis and Diphtheria

There were no notifications during 1959.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

The area of the Bellingham Rural District is 246,645 acres.

The estimated population for 1959 is 5,390.

The number of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1959, was 1,685, of which 161 are owned by the Local Authority.

The sum represented by a penny rate is £318.

The rateable value is £71,875.

HEALTH SERVICES

Laboratory Facilities

Facilities in the area continue to be provided by the Public Health Laboratory in Newcastle General Hospital, which gives an efficient service.

Ambulance Service

The local ambulance service is provided for the County Council by the Red Cross, and a satisfactory service is maintained. In addition to the ambulance, a car service is available for suitable cases and is of considerable value in such a large district. Since the passenger train service was discontinued much extra mileage has been run to allow patients to keep hospital appointments and to allow mothers and children to attend clinics, but the use of the service appears to have stabilised now.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting

The district nurses are all provided with cars and their nursing work continues to be excellent. In spite of the difficulty of arranging for suitable help in a country district, the Home Help Service run by the County Council continues to function satisfactorily. The County Health Visitors work in harmony with the General Practitioners in the area and do much valuable work.

Maternity and Child Welfare

Five Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, staffed by the County Council, operate at Bellingham, Otterburn, Byrness, Kielder and Wark. Immunisation against diphtheria is carried out at these centres or is done by the General Practitioner, while all vaccination is carried out by the General Practitioners. The demand for poliomyelitis vaccination has been met, in the age groups eligible, by special sessions at Bellingham, as well as by vaccination at schools, clinics and the surgeries of family doctors.

TABLE I.

The following table shows the principal statistics for the years 1956-1959.

Year	Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	General Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births
1956	19.39	10.39	Nil.
1957	22.90	11.25	Nil.
1958	18.22	8.01	Nil.
1959	21.61	7.42	9.6

ANNUAL RETURNS OF FOOD POISONING NOTIFICATIONS, YEAR 1959.

Food Poisoning Notifications Returned to Registrar General

IST QTR.	2ND QTR.	3RD QTR.	4TH QTR.	TOTAL
Outbreaks due to identified agents	Nil.
Outbreaks of undiscovered cause	Nil.
Single Cases :				
Agent identified	Nil.
Unknown cause	Nil.
Total				Nil.

TABLE II.

Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1959 :—

Notifiable Disease	Males.	Females	Totals
Scarlet Fever.. ..	1	—	1
Whooping Cough	2	2	4
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	14	20	34
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	—	1	1
Dysentery	4	—	4
Smallpox	—	—	—
Acute Encephalitis	—	—	—
Enteric or Typhoid Fevers	—	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—
Meningococcal Infection	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—
Tuberculosis	—	—	—
Totals	21	23	44

TABLE III.
TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality during 1959 :—

Age Periods	New Cases				Nett Deaths in Bellingham Rural District			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—15 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The following table classifies deaths according to their age groups :—

Age Groups			Males	Females	Totals.
0—1 ..	..	..	1	—	1
1—9 ..	..	..	—	—	—
10—19 ..	..	..	—	—	—
20—29 ..	..	..	—	1	1
30—39 ..	..	..	—	1	1
40—49 ..	..	..	1	—	1
50—59 ..	..	..	4	2	6
60—69 ..	..	..	8	2	10
70—79 ..	..	..	4	6	10
80—89 ..	..	..	4	4	8
90—99 ..	..	..	—	2	2
Totals ..	..	..	22	18	40

INFANT MORTALITY
during year ending 31st December, 1959
9.6 per 1,000 live Births

ANALYSIS OF DEATHS BY CAUSES

According to Registrar General's Classification.

Causes of Death		1958		1959	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory ..		—	—	—	—
2. Tuberculosis, other ..		—	—	—	—
3. Syphilitic disease ..		—	—	—	—
4. Diphtheria		—	—	—	—
5. Whooping Cough ..		—	—	—	—
6. Meningococcal infections ..		—	—	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis ..		—	—	—	—
8. Measles		—	—	—	—
9. Other infective and para-diseases		—	—	—	—
10. Malignant Neoplasm— Stomach ..		1	—	—	—
11. do. Lung and Bronchus ..		—	—	—	—
12. do. Breast ..		—	—	—	1
13. do. Uterus ..		—	—	—	—
14. Other malignant and Lymphatic neoplasms ..		3	3	2	3
15. Leukaemia, Aleukaemia ..		—	—	—	—
16. Diabetes		—	—	—	—
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system		4	2	3	4
18. Coronary Disease, Angina..		8	4	7	4
19. Hypertension with heart disease		—	—	—	—
20. Other heart disease ..		3	9	3	1
21. Other circulatory disease ..		2	—	1	2
22. Influenza		—	—	—	—
23. Pneumonia		—	—	—	—
24. Bronchitis		—	—	2	1
25. Other diseases of respir- tory system		—	—	—	—
26. Ulcer of Stomach & duo- denum		1	—	2	—
27. Gastritis, Enteritis, Diarr- hoea		—	—	—	—
28. Nephritis and Nephrosis ..		1	—	—	1
29. Hyperplasia of Prostrate ..		2	—	—	—
30. Pregnancy, Child Birth, Abortion		—	—	—	—
31. Congenital Malformations..		—	—	—	—
32. Other defined and ill- defined diseases ..		—	—	1	1
33. Motor Vehicle accidents ..		—	—	1	—
34. All other accidents.. ..		1	1	—	—
35. Suicide		—	—	—	—
36. Homicide and operations of war		—	—	—	—
		26	19	22	18
		45		40	

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1959.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA

The multifarious duties with which the Public Health Department has to deal have continued. A detailed account of some of the work involved will be found under the relevant headings.

WATER

Without question, one of the greatest services provided over recent years has been the provision of a mains water supply throughout the area (Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company). Representation has been successful in clearing up small pockets of properties unconnected to the main supply. Some further eight properties at Kirkharle are now receiving a mains supply and a further twenty one properties at Kirkwhelpington will have such facilities next year.

Mention of Stannersburn water scheme is referred to in the Medical Officer of Health's section of this Report.

A small private water scheme was approved covering six properties at Woodhead on the Hesleyside Estate.

The pattern of former years continues wherein isolated holdings with inadequate or suspect supplies are decreasing—grant aid being received from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Water Samples

Samples taken by the Local Authority, together with the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, number 147 ; 20 proved unsatisfactory, the remainder were of excellent and satisfactory quality. Mention should be recorded of the splendid co-operation which exists between Dr. A. T. Palin, B.Sc., PH.D., F.R.I.C., Chief Chemist of the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, and this Department. Such understanding results in excellent field work.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Details of proposals will be observed in the Medical Officer's Report.

Schemes in operation in the area at the moment are : Bellingham, Woodburn, Wark, Birtley — Local Authority ; Kielder, Butteryhaugh, Stonehaugh, Bryness — Forestry Commission.

Maintenance of schemes under the jurisdiction of the Local Authority is carried out by one full-time employee and part-time employees. Complete reorganisation will be necessary by a mobile unit of two men when further projects are completed, to ensure a better standard of maintenance.

Private Septic Tanks

44 treatment plants have been installed.

HOUSING

Local Authority building : Nil.

Private building : 4.

House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959 : Improvement—Reconditioning.

27 applications for improvement grants were approved. During the year financial assistance to grant-aided schemes completed amounted to £3,876.

Hill Farming and Livestock Rearing Acts, 1946-1954.

A further 7 grants were approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Regular and systematic cleansing of the main settlement groups throughout the area has been maintained. The areas covered are :—

Bellingham	Wark	Ridsdale
Reedsmouth	Stonehaugh	Great Bavington
Greenhaugh	Birtley	Little Bavington
Kirkharle	Falstone	Rochester
Kirkwhelpington	Kielder	Otterburn
Byrness	East Woodburn	West Woodburn

Number of properties serviced : 1,395.

Tips. There are nine tips in the area, situate at :—

Birtley	Woodburn	Knowesgate
Otterburn	Falstone	Stonehaugh
Hareshaw	Kielder	Byrness

Employees : 2 loader drivers and 3 loaders.

Tonnage : 3,460 tons.

Cost : £4,590.

A detail report, submitted in June, was considered respecting the advisability or otherwise of extending this service. It was decided that, in view of the scattered nature of the rural area, the service operated was as equitable as possible to be economically sound. Any extension to cover other properties would be considered individually.

This principle obtains with all basic services administered by the Local Authority by virtue of its area (380 square miles). Equality of benefit can never be attained unless cost is excessive and uneconomic.

LITTER ACT, 1958

Active consideration has been given to this legislation by the provision of further 16 litter bins in the area. Generally speaking, country folk are tidy in their habits. Motorists, although encouraged to enjoy the scenic beauty of this rugged rural area, with its open moorland, National Parks and afforestation, because of lack of thought and carelessness, often make it a repository for loathsome litter.

*The rippling river — the open moor,
The National Park — the air is pure ;
The scene is spoilt by thoughtless man
Who dumps his paper, peel and can !*

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

One operator is in the employ of the Council and methods of treatment are those approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

Treatments :

Sewers : Regular and systematic treating in Bellingham, Woodburn and Wark.

Farms and Business Premises	..	11
Tips	.. .. .	11
Other properties	.. .. .	2
		—
		24
		—

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924-1954.

There are five butchers in the area — three operate slaughterhouses and two buy carcass meat. 100% meat inspection is maintained. Seven slaughterman's licenses have been issued.

Analysis of inspection is as under :—

Bullocks	..	..	24	
Heifers	..	..	78	
Calves	..	..	1	
Pigs	..	..	43	
Sheep	..	..	163	Total : 309.

Condemned :—

BOVINE.	SHEEP.	PIGS.
8 livers	1 part liver	2 livers
4 part livers		
11 pair lungs		
2 head and tongue		
Calf and Organs ($1\frac{1}{2}$ cwts.)		
2 forequarters and loin.		

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1958.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE REPORT.

This legislation has been implemented — detailed reports on three slaughterhouses in the area have been prepared, presented to the Local Authority, and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

Other Foods

Other foods examined and found unfit for human consumption :—

11 tins Meat	7 tins Fish	15 tins Peas
16 tins Fruit	13 tins Evap. Milk	3 tins Beans
	4 tins Soup	

Milk (Special Designation) Regulations, 1949-1954.

Licenses issued during the year are as under :—

West Wylam & Prudhoe Co-operative Society Branches:

Bellingham	)	Pasteurised, Sterilised and
Wark	)	Tuberculin
Falstone	)	Tested.

- W. Hogg, Fourstones—retails in the area Pasteurised and Tuberculin Tested.
 G. Craghill, Wark—retails Tuberculin Tested.
 M. Slassor, Ridsdale—retails Sterilised.

Milk (Special Designation) (Specified Areas) Order, 1959

This Order, covering Bellingham R.D.C., came into operation on the 6th April, 1959, wherein all milk sold by retail must be “ specially designated ” milk, i.e. pasteurised, sterilised or tuberculin tested milk.

The following retailers have received consent of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food to supply un-designated milk :—

- J. E. Pearson, Burnside View, Kirkwhelpington.
 W. Johnson & Sons, Blackhalls, Kirkwhelpington.
 Mrs. J. Brown, East Whitehill, Kirkwhelpington.
 Messrs. Stuart & Potts, Bought Hill Mill, Tarsset.
 Mrs. V. Hutton & Son, Hindridge, Wark.

Such legislation follows the pattern throughout the country, and is yet another step forward, ensuring a wholesome product.

FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS, 1955-56.

Some fifty six premises in the area come within the scope of this legislation. Regular and systematic inspection is maintained. Education in desirable practice methods of food handling presents the greatest problems, wherein retailers tend to be fixed in their habits.

Food Premises : The following are the types of food premises in the district :

Bakeries	..	..	..	..	2
Butchers	..	..	..	..	5
Cafes ..	..	..	..	..	7
Clubs	..	..	..	..	4
General Dealers (Grocers, etc.)	..			..	18
Public Houses	..	..	..	..	11
School Kitchens	..	..	..	..	9

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Four cases were reported where nuisances through pollution were caused. Informal representation resolved these problems.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936. Sec. 269.**Tents, Vans and Sheds**

The Forestry Commission caravan site at Lewisburn is still increasing in popularity.

Consideration is being given by the Local Authority, in conjunction with County Planning, respecting the provision of further sites within the Rural Area.

SUMMARY OF WORK EFFECTED

	By Informal Action	By Statutory Notice	Total
SANITARY CONVENIENCES :			
Privies and privy ashpits abolished ..	44	—	44
Water closets provided	44	—	44
Number of above for which grant was given (P.H.A. 1936, Sec. 47)	—	—	—
Sanitary bins provided	40	—	40
DRAINAGE :			
New drains constructed	67	—	67
Drains repaired or reconstructed ..	38	—	38
Additional gulliea provided	310	—	310
Old gullies replaced	9	—	9
Scullery sinks provided	27	—	27
Scullery waste pipes repaired	21	—	21
Scullery waste pipes trapped	7	—	7
Yards repaired or reconstructed ..	15	—	15

INSPECTIONS AND VISITS**Housing :**

Demolition	25
Improvements and Repairs ..	516
Verminous premises	3
Water Supply	69
Drainage	290
Factories and Workshops	30
Licensed Premises	41
Refuse Collection and Disposal ..	209
Rodent Control	36
Infectious Disease	27
Slaughterhouses	496
Shops	316
Fishmongers (vans)	9
Ice Cream Samples	3
Bakeries	57

PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

Part I of the Act.

I.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health
(including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

PREMISES (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	12	47	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	18	35	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises) ...	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	30	82	—	—

II.—Cases in which DEFECTS were found

(If defects are discovered at the premises on two, three or more separate occasions they should be reckoned as two, three or more “cases”).

PARTICULARS (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred To H.M. Inspector (4)	By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of Cleanliness (S. 1.) ...	5	5	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S. 2)	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S. 3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S. 4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S. 6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S. 7)					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	4	4	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work ...	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	9	9	—	—	—

Part VII of the Act. Sections 110 and 111.

Outwork.

This part is not applicable to this Rural Area.

1959 has been a year of consolidating work, made possible by the support of loyal colleagues and the goodwill of the members of the Council.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

S. CLOUGH,

Senior Public Health Inspector.

